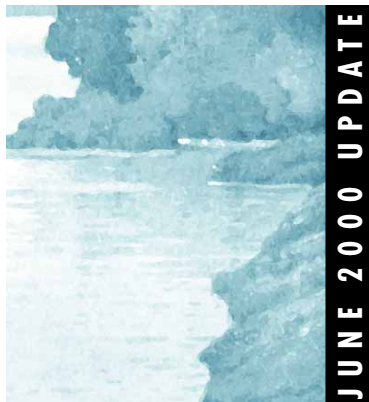


Cleaning up our WATER

▪ CLEAN WATER PROGRAM ▪



JUNE 2000 UPDATE

Clean Water Program boosts its efforts

Clark County's new Clean Water Program, which went into effect on January 1, 2000, is allowing Clark County to carry out additional work to control and clean our stormwater. In combination with the county's previous efforts, it means that we can take important steps forward in meeting state and federal standards for clean water.

The additional stormwater management activities are funded by Clean Water service fees. The budget for the Clean Water Program for 2000 is just under \$5 million. Along with the first fee assessment for the program, we want to provide you with a brief overview of some of the activities that have been under way to this point.



Maintaining storm drains, ponds, ditches, and other facilities helps keep sediment and pollutants out of our stormwater. In turn, this keeps pollutants from entering our surface water—wetlands, streams, rivers, and lakes. It also keeps them from seeping into our groundwater, which is the main source of drinking water for Clark County.

Keeping bioswales and stormwater ponds in good working condition

A bioswale is a low, flat, grassy channel that traps sediment and other pollutants. As stormwater runoff seeps through the bioswale, the pollutants it carries—oil, chemicals, debris, etc.—stick to the vegetation and are filtered out so that they are less likely to enter our water system. This year an

inventory of all of the county's bioswales was completed and a new mowing schedule was put in place to ensure that all bioswales are mowed at least four times annually. Sediment removal, reseeding of bare spots, and debris removal are being carried out as needed. Stormwater ponds are inspected eight times annually to make sure they are free of noxious weeds, litter, and other items that could keep them from functioning effectively.

(Clark County is responsible for maintaining 330 bioswales and ponds in the unincorporated areas.)

Inspecting and cleaning catch basins

Catch basins collect runoff from streets and parking lots, routing the runoff to the larger storm sewer system. They need to be cleaned out regularly to function properly. This year the county has increased the number of times it inspects and cleans each catch basin and manhole to at least once per year, with problem catch basins and manholes scheduled for more frequent cleaning. By the end of May, the county had inspected

and cleaned all of its catch basins.

(Clark County is responsible for 5,540 catch basins and 2,420 manholes in the unincorporated areas.)

Increasing street sweeping

Street sweeping is important to water quality because it helps keep pollutants out of the storm drain system. The streets in all of the county's residential areas will now be swept nine times annually. Major roadways will be swept 12 times annually.

(Clark County is responsible for sweeping 450 miles of roadway.)



County ordinances and codes play a crucial part in keeping our water clean by designating what is legally allowed and what is not. The codes also serve an educational function. As building plans and construction practices are reviewed and inspected to ensure code compliance, people become more aware of activities that affect our water quality and the role they can play in the clean water effort.

Revising stormwater and erosion control ordinances

Clark County is currently revising our stormwater and erosion control ordinances into a single ordinance. It

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CITIZENS LEAD CLEAN WATER EFFORT

The Clean Water fees are based on recommendations from a citizens task force that looked at a range of options for paying for the additional stormwater services the county must provide. Its final recommendations were the result of extensive community-wide discussions that took place over a six-month period in 1999.

will have stronger requirements that comply with state standards. A separate water quality ordinance is also being revised to include maintenance of all private stormwater facilities. Improved maintenance of stormwater facilities will help keep sediments and other pollutants out of the stormwater and ultimately out of our surface water and groundwater.

Enforcing environmental codes

The county can now respond to complaints related to environmental issues in a more thorough, timely way. Two new erosion control inspectors were hired this year, along with two additional code enforcement officers who deal specifically with clean water concerns. By the end of the summer, an additional stormwater facilities inspector will also be hired.



Individual actions have a huge cumulative effect on water quality. The things we do—the way we fertilize our lawns, even how we wash our cars—can help keep our water clean. Clark County has initiated a number of programs to provide citizens with information about habits that promote clean water.

Outreach programs

- **Natural Lawn Care Campaign.** To reduce residents' use of toxic yard and garden chemicals that can have a negative effect on our water.
- **Stormwater Assistance for Businesses.** To provide businesses with technical assistance and information on the best ways to manage stormwater effectively.
- **River Rangers.** Trained volunteers teach elementary students how we use, treat, and protect water in our homes and communities. Along with Clark County, this program is spon-

sored by the city of Vancouver, Clark Public Utilities, and the Environmental Information Cooperative.

- **Watersheds Stewards.** Trained volunteers provide community education on issues related to clean water and the health of our watersheds. Along with Clark County, this program is sponsored by the Washington State University Cooperative Extension.

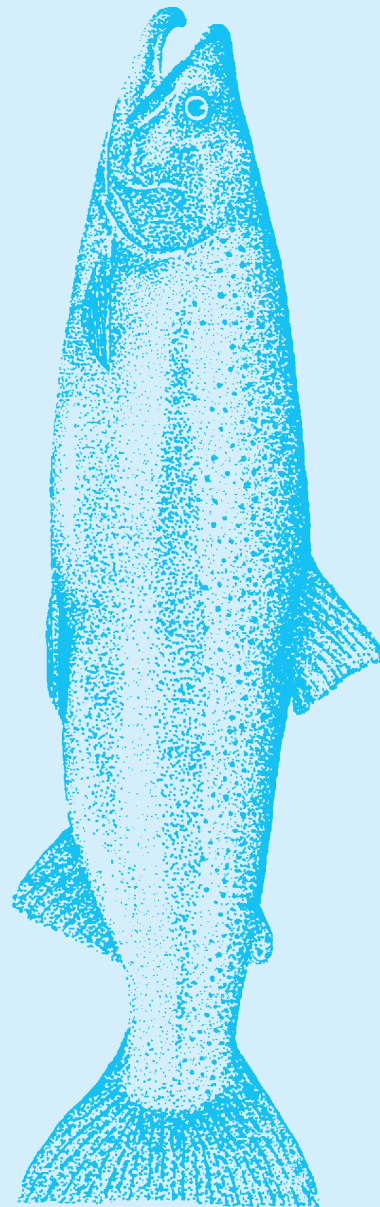
Integrating Burnt Bridge Creek utility

The Burnt Bridge Creek stormwater utility has been incorporated into the Clean Water Program. Property owners will no longer receive bills dealing with Burnt Bridge Creek. Money remaining from Burnt Bridge Creek funds is being used exclusively for drainage construction projects that are specifically within the Burnt Bridge Creek watershed.

Clean Water Commission

Appointed by the Board of Clark County Commissioners, the nine-member Clean Water Commission has key responsibilities for ensuring that the program is responsive and accountable to citizens. Members of the Clean Water Commission are Robert Agard, Willie Bourlet, Cal Ek, Dana Kemper, Mary Martin, Susan Rasmussen, Don Steinke, Art Stubbs, and Peter Tuck.

The Clean Water Commission meets the third Wednesday of every month from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Clark County Public Works Operations Center, 4700 NE 78th Street, Vancouver. Meetings are open to the public. For up-to-date meeting information, please contact Susan Newman, Environmental Services Division, at (360)397-6118 ext. 4352 or send an e-mail to cleanwater@co.clark.wa.us.



THE FISH AND US

Several species of fish have been listed as threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act. The listing affects Clark County as well as other counties in Washington and Oregon. Improving our stormwater management will help our local efforts to recover fish because clean water and healthy watersheds are good not just for people but for fish as well.

For questions, comments, additional information on the Clean Water Program, or if you'd like to know more about individual actions you can take to help keep our water clean, please call Clark County's Environmental Services Division at (360)397-6118 ext. 4352 or send an e-mail to cleanwater@co.clark.wa.us.